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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: SPECIAL SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Report of the Second Committee (Part VIII)*

Rapporteur: Mr. Rae Kwon CHUNG (Republic of Korea)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 98 (see A/52/629, para. 2). Action was taken on sub-item (g) at the 43rd and 51st meetings, on 19 November and 9 December 1997. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/52/SR.43 and 51).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.29

2. At the 43rd meeting, on 19 November, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly on environment and development" (A/C.2/52/L.29), which read:

* The report of the Committee on this agenda item will be issued in several parts, under the symbol A/52/629 and addenda.

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 51/181 of 16 December 1996, in which it decided to convene a special session from 23 to 27 June 1997, at the highest possible level, for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21,

"Recalling that the special session was undertaken on the basis of and with full respect for the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1]

"Reaffirming that Agenda 21[2] remains the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development and that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted at its nineteenth special session,[3] will enhance the full implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

"Recognizing that the nineteenth special session was the first high-level global meeting devoted to the comprehensive review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held on United Nations premises, and that the experience gained during the preparations will need to be carefully examined and taken into account in the preparations for forthcoming special sessions of the Assembly that will carry out reviews of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of other recent global conferences such as the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

"Noting with concern that the assessment and review made by the Assembly at its nineteenth special session concluded that although some progress had been made, the overall trends with respect to the global environment had not improved,

"Convinced that the means of implementation identified in chapters 33 and 34 of Agenda 21, in particular the provision of adequate and predictable financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, require stronger commitments and concrete action so as to enhance the full implementation of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted at its nineteenth special session,

"Recalling that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in the industrialized countries, are identified in Agenda 21 as the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment,

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[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

"Noting that the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 is scheduled to be carried out in the year 2002,

"Reaffirming its resolution S-19/2 of 28 June 1997, the annex to which contains the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,

"1. Notes that the nineteenth special session took place in New York from 23 to 28 June 1997 and expresses its appreciation for the high-level of attendance by heads of State and Government and other heads of delegation at that session;

"2. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly;[4]

"3. Recognizes that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] includes a statement of commitment to Agenda 21 and to the goals of sustainable development; an assessment of progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in all main areas of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference; a broad range of decisions and recommendations aimed at fostering progress in various sectoral and cross-sectoral areas of Agenda 21 and, in particular in its means of implementation; decisions aimed at strengthening global and regional institutional arrangements for achieving sustainable development; and recommendations on the future methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the programme of work of the Commission for the period 1998-2002;

"4. Recognizes also that a mutually supportive balance between the international and the national environment is needed in the pursuit of sustainable development and that the gap between developed and developing countries points to the continued need for a dynamic and enabling international economic environment supportive of international cooperation, particularly in the fields of finance, technology transfer, debt and trade, if the momentum for global progress towards sustainable development is to be maintained and increased;

"5. Welcomes the establishment of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

"6. Calls upon all Governments, the relevant United Nations actors, the international community, including non-governmental organizations, to implement the programme of action adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests;[5]

"7. Invites the Commission on Sustainable Development to consider establishing funding modalities to enable developing countries that are not

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[4] A/52/280.

[5] See E/CN.17/1997/12.

members of the Commission to participate in the work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and urges Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for that purpose;

"8. Welcomes the dialogue to be conducted under the aegis of the Commission of Sustainable Development, beginning at its sixth session, aimed at building consensus on the necessary actions for the implementation of all aspects of the sustainable use of fresh water for social and economic purposes;

"9. Stresses the urgent need to replenish the Global Environment Facility to enable it to fulfil its objectives effectively in accordance with its mandate;

"10. Welcomes the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in preparation for the special session and invites the Commission to continue its supportive role as agreed, in collaboration with international institutions, in carrying out its multi-year work programme;

"11. Recognizes the important contributions that were made during the preparatory process and at the special session itself by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, and stresses the need for their continued involvement in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

"12. Invites Governments to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, to participate in the follow-up meetings envisaged for the next five years, and to make timely contributions to the Trust Fund to support the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

"13. Welcomes the valuable contributions made by the task managers of the various chapters of Agenda 21 and the conferences of the parties to the conventions related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

"14. Welcomes also the action taken by the Secretary-General in strengthening the system-wide intersectoral cooperation and coordination for the further implementation of Agenda 21, and for the promotion of coordinated follow-up to the major international conferences in the area of sustainable development, as outlined in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform";[6]

"15. Welcomes further the action taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the functions of the Division for Sustainable Development to support action at all levels to implement Agenda 21 and to ensure greater coherence in the Secretariat's work in the area of sustainable development in general, including, in particular, stronger support for regional and national activities;

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[6] A/51/950.

"16. Stresses that the full implementation of Agenda 21, and that to achieve advance results by the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 in the year 2002, will continue to require the concerted efforts of all Governments, taking into account the priority areas adopted by the Assembly at its nineteenth special session, and calls upon the developed countries to fulfil their commitments with respect to financial resources and technology transfer;

"17. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session, under the item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development', a sub-item entitled 'Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly on environment and development', and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at that session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At the 51st meeting, on 9 December, the Chairman informed the Committee that draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.29 had been withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft decision A/C.2/52/L.60

4. At the 51st meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hans-Peter Glanzer (Austria), introduced a draft decision entitled "Implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21" (A/C.2/52/L.60).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision (see para. 10, draft decision I).

6. Before the adoption of the draft decision, statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and China; after the adoption of the draft decision, a statement was made by the representative of Papua New Guinea (see A/C.2/52/SR.51).

C. Draft decision A/C.2/52/L.61

7. At the 51st meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Hans-Peter Glanzer (Austria), introduced a draft decision entitled "Progress in the implementation of conventions related to sustainable development" (A/C.2/52/L.61).

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision (see para. 10, draft decision II).

9. Before the adoption of the draft decision, statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and

China; after the adoption of the draft decision, a statement was made by the representative of Papua New Guinea (see A/C.2/52/SR.51).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decisions:

DRAFT DECISION I

Implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

The General Assembly, recalling its resolution S-19/2 of 28 June 1997, by which it adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, decides:

(a) To take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly;[7]

(b) To include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development" a sub-item entitled "Implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21".

DRAFT DECISION II

Progress in the implementation of conventions related to sustainable development

The General Assembly, recalling its resolution S-19/2 of 28 June 1997, by which it adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, decides:

(a) To continue to review the progress made in implementing the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions relating to sustainable development, bearing in mind section IV.A of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[8] and, in this regard,

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[7] A/52/280.

[8] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

requests the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on ways and means of undertaking this review;

(b) To invite, beginning in the year 2000, the conferences of the parties to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions relating to sustainable development, to take all appropriate measures to avoid convening their sessions and those of their subsidiary bodies during the sessions of the General Assembly.